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File - Memo for Record
- Sang

CONFIDENTIAL

February 18, 1955

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION:

1. LAI VAN SANG, Chief of the National Police and Surete, called on Ambassador Collins today at his own request. Sang had outlined in general terms the organization of the Surete and police forces in the country. He said that in South Vietnam there are about 2,000 Surete agents. Asked what the structure was in Central Vietnam, Sang said that there are a few agents there at present, but that certain Surete agents evacuated from the North are being trained to take over Surete jobs in the Center. Sang said that there are about 4,000 police agents in the Saigon-Cholon prefecture. He added that provincial police are not under his direction, but are attached to the Chiefs of Province. In each Province there is a "Brigade" of the Surete which is responsible to him as National Director.

2. Ambassador Collins asked Sang if Surete and police agents were Binh Xuyen. Sang denied that these agents were Binh Xuyen, adding that Binh Xuyen are primarily military. Asked who were the men about the Surete Headquarters wearing green berets, Sang replied that these were members of police flying squads.

3. Sang said that he and his forces were having great difficulties owing to the intrigues of his predecessor Mai Huu Xuan, who is now Chief of Military Security. Sang alleged that during his term of office Mai Huu Xuan profited personally, acquiring land and houses. In his present position he continues to send his military security agents to pick up civilians and squeeze them.

4. Sang gave some autobiographical details saying that he had organized Binh Xuyen battalions between 1945-1948, and had commanded Battalion No. 9. After the Binh Xuyen rallied to the Government in 1948 Sang accepted the position of Military Advisor to General Vay Vien.

5. Sang referred to the recent activities of Hoa Hao in Saigon which include the hand grenading of three Vietnamese language newspapers. He said that the President had given orders that security guards were to be mounted about these newspaper offices, but implied that he was disappointed that more radical steps against the Hoa Hao were not sanctioned by the President.

6. Sang ...

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6. Sang volunteered that Diem is the best Prime Minister Vietnam has had, but added that Diem's entourage is objectionable. He said that the President had been very understanding of police requirements and had made funds available to set up the flying squads.

7. After Sang left the Ambassador's office he told Sturm that he had neglected to tell the Ambassador that in connection with the reorganization of the police and Surete forces which he has in mind, he was thinking of making a trip to the U.S. He did not request our assistance.

PSturm/kar